EV 918 498 926 US

CLAIMS

1. An expandable luggage system, comprising:

(a) a container having a predetermined shape and size

(b) at least one extendible section of fabric attached thereto; and

(c) means for applying a force to said at least one section attached to said container and wherein said force is adapted to urge said at least one section in a direction that is toward said container.

2. An expandable luggage system, comprising:

(a) a container having a predetermined shape and size

(b) at least one extendible section;

(c) means for retracting said at least one extendible section attached to said container wherein a force that is adapted to urge said at least one extendible section

in a direction that is toward said container is applied by said means for retracting.

3. The expandable luggage system of claim 2 wherein said container includes an article of luggage.

4. The expandable luggage system of claim 2 wherein said means for retracting includes an elastomer.

5. The expandable luggage system of claim 4 wherein said elastomer includes a plurality of elastomeric bands, each of which is attached at one end thereof to a portion of said container and to said extendible section at an opposite end thereof.

6. The expandable luggage system of claim 2 including an extendible section of material that is disposed intermediate said extendible section and said container.

7. The expandable luggage system of claim 6 wherein said material includes a fabric.

8. The expandable luggage system of claim 7 including a first piping applied around a perimeter of said container and a second piping applied to a perimeter of said extendible section and including a plurality of elastomeric bands, each of said bands attached at one end thereof to said first piping and to said second piping at an opposite end thereof.

9. The expandable luggage system of claim 6 including means for retracting said extendible section of material into an interior of said container when said extendible section is disposed in a retracted position.

10. The expandable luggage system of claim 9 wherein said means for retracting includes providing at least one hinge mechanism that is attached to said material and is adapted to fold into said container.

11. The expandable luggage system of claim 10 wherein said hinge mechanism includes two plastic members that are in parallel alignment with each other and which are each attached to said material including a longitudinal space therebetween, said longitudinal space of material providing for a predicable location of flexing for said hinge mechanism.

12. The expandable luggage system of claim 2 wherein said container includes a rigid material.

13. The expandable luggage system of claim 2 wherein said container includes a flexible material.

14. The expandable luggage system of claim 2 wherein a plurality of said expandable luggage systems are included with the same container.

15. The expandable luggage system of claim 14 wherein said plurality of expandable luggage systems are disposed on different surfaces of said container.

16. The expandable luggage system of claim 14 wherein said plurality of expandable luggage systems are disposed on the same surface of said container.

17. The expandable luggage system of claim 16 wherein said plurality of expandable luggage systems are disposed one atop the other.

18. A method for increasing an interior volume of a luggage, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a container having a predetermined shape and size and including at least one extendible section of fabric attached thereto and including means for applying a first force to said at least one extendible section attached to said container and wherein said first force is adapted to urge said at least one section in a direction that is toward said container into a retracted position;

(b) filling said container with at least an aggregate of objects that include a volume which is greater than that of said container when said container is disposed in said retracted position; and

(c) applying a second force to a portion of said container sufficient to close said container and wherein said second force is sufficient to overcome said first force and to cause at least a portion of said extendible section to be displaced in a direction that is away from said container and into an expanded position.